

Module A Section 3
Behavior as Communication
Quiz

Read the Following Scenario:

Ted is 28 years old and is living in an apartment on his own for the first time. While residing at the State School and Hospital for the previous five years, Ted developed a history of unpredictable behavior. Despite this, he did quite well in his apartment for the first two months. A support person came every morning at 7am to assist Ted with his morning routine, providing reminders to bath, cook breakfast, and straighten his apartment before heading to his part time job at a nursery. Ted loves to plant and grow things; he works in the local nursery five days a week for up to four hours a day. His Support Broker was able to secure this job following a meeting with Ted and his father (his current support circle) at which time Ted talked about what he like to do best: grow plants and garden. When Ted was a child, he would often help his father who had become a successful home gardener.

During his third month of living in his apartment, Ted started to engage in challenging behaviors. One morning when no support staff came, Ted took the fire extinguisher off the wall in the hallway and sprayed it on the inside of the building. Another resident called the police. Ted was taken to the police station. This happened three times before it was decided that maybe Ted was not ready for community placement. Each of the three times, Ted's support staff did not show up on time and each time they were up to two hours late.

For each question below, select one answer that best corresponds to Positive Behavioral Supports. There is only one right answer for each question.

1. In this scenario, who is the intended receiver of Ted's communication?

- a. The State. Ted is saying "I am not ready for community life."
- b. Ted was communicating with no one. He just likes to set off fire extinguishers. He has a history of unpredictable behavior and this is just one more exhibition of the same.
- c. His neighbors. Ted was communicating his dissatisfaction with his neighbors.
- d. His support staff. They were late and he got upset. No one was there to help him, and he was very disoriented when timelines were not kept.

2. An appropriate response for this kind of behavior would be:

- a) Send Ted back to the institution; he clearly cannot live alone. Once he has learned new skills he may be able to return, but until he can demonstrate he can be trusted, he should not live in the community.
- b) Identify the communicative intent of Ted's behavior; try to change the circumstances that trigger the response, and teach Ted to use alternative behavior that meets his needs and are equally as effective.

- c) Talk to Ted's Dad about providing a reprimand for Ted. Find a type of punishment that his Dad could implement to get the message across to Ted that his behavior is unacceptable.
- d) Tell Ted that if it happens again, he will lose his job.

3. *Based on the information you have from the scenario, which plan focuses on identifying what is happening, what the behavior is communicating, and possible strategies that support Ted's Self-Determination?*

- a) Ted gets very frustrated when timelines are not kept. He needs support mostly in the morning and at night. When support workers do not show up in the morning, Ted becomes disoriented. To minimize Ted's frustration, Ted's support hours were changed to accommodate his need for early morning supports (the agency cut Ted's hours and so they were not scheduled to come until 10:00am). A one button quick dial to his father was installed and Ted was taught to use it to call his father whenever he felt frustrated and/or when his support staff was five minutes late. Ted's dad calls, every morning fifteen minutes after the hour, to greet Ted, talk about the day and to assure that the support staff showed up.
- b) Ted is told to go into the bathroom and lock the door every time he feels frustrated. When in the bathroom, he is to repeat to himself "I will not be bad today." He needs to repeat this ten times. When he feels calm again he is instructed to unlock the bathroom door and start his daily checklist of chores. If the feeling of frustration continues, he is instructed to go back into the bathroom. He is not to leave his apartment until someone shows up. If he does, he will not be able to go to work that day and instead he will be coached to practice the bathroom routine.
- c) Ted is told that his behavior is unacceptable and if it recurs he will not have the right to live in the community. He is told that once he goes back to the institution his job, and his apartment will be given away. Adults cannot be allowed to get away with this kind of behavior. Ted needs to learn that he cannot always get his way and if he behaves badly there will be significant consequences.
- d) It is decided that Ted needs to move home with his father. Ted is really his father's responsibility. The agency which provides support to Ted cannot be held responsible for this kind of behavior and they should not have to be accountable for a 7 am wake-up call. After all, Ted is 28 years old.

4. *If you were Ted's Support Broker, your role in this circumstance would be to:*

- a) Inform the State Medicaid office that Ted is inappropriately placed and cannot remain in the community.
- b) Come to Ted's apartment every morning at 7 am to make sure that the support staff shows up to minimize his frustration.
- c) Become his coach, and teach him the alternative behaviors he needs to display to minimize challenges.
- d) Gather his circle of supports and agency support team. Coordinate an assessment with behavioral specialists who can assist the team in understanding what Ted's behavior is communicating.

- e) Identify what Ted is communicating through his behavior and design and implement a plan on your own. Ted is *your* boss. You do not need anyone else to help figure out a good behavioral support plan. Implement the plan on your own.

5. *Based on the information in this section, what is a consequence of not obtaining a behavioral assessment in response to challenging behaviors?*

- a) Without feedback from a specialist, the individual with challenging behaviors and support staff may struggle and become frustrated, making the situation even more difficult.
- b) People often learn best by trying a strategy out and seeing what happens versus having a specialist tell them what to do. A Support Broker needs to advocate for the entire team in order to have long-term benefits.
- c) The world of disability services can really be up and down, assessments are just one option out of many. A Support Broker can only do so much.
- d) Since a behavioral assessment can look bad on an individual's record, it is better to avoid calling on a specialist and support the team to figure it out themselves.